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POWERBALL TICKET WORTH \$800,000 SOLD IN CONCORD **-“Carolina Cash 5” Ticket Worth Over \$416,000 Bought in Monroe-**

RALEIGH- They have shared friendship and work since they were teenagers and now Nolan Helms and Al Smith are sharing a Powerball prize of \$800,000. Helms of **Charlotte** and Smith of **Iron Station** say they take turns buying their Powerball tickets— one buys for the Saturday drawings the other the Wednesday drawings. Helms picked the numbers this time when he purchased their ticket at Sam’s Mart #20 on Speedway Boulevard in Concord.

Helms said his wife had checked their numbers in the newspaper and when she realized they had won she tackled him. The men and their wives told North Carolina Education Lottery (NCEL) officials they feel blessed, grateful and giddy over the win. They have a variety of plans for their winnings. Helms said he would buy his wife a new car. Smith said he will use some for his grandchildren’s college funds. The group plan to celebrate soon with a big night on the town.

The holidays proved to be lucky for several Powerball players. Cesar Gonzalez of **Magnolia** claimed his \$200,000 prize today. He said he was happy and may buy a new truck. A ticket worth \$40,000 was also purchased for Saturday’s Powerball drawing. That was sold in **Cabarrus County**, but the prize has yet to be claimed.

For Saturday’s Powerball drawing, a total of 36,284 Powerball players won prizes ranging from \$800,000 down to \$3 for a total payout in prizes worth over \$1.3 million. The Powerball jackpot for Wednesday’s drawing is worth an estimated \$32 million.

Also today, Jerry Blanchard of **Union County** claimed his \$416,702 prize after matching all five numbers on last night’s “Carolina Cash 5” drawing. His prize is the seventh highest top prize won on a single ticket since “Carolina Cash 5” was introduced a little over a year ago. Blanchard said he would pay bills, save some and possibly take a trip.

Today is the last full day for players who want a chance at becoming a “Merry Millionaire” to buy “Merry Millionaire Raffle” tickets. Raffle ticket sales will close at 2 a.m. on December 27, 2007 unless tickets sell out before then.

As of 2 p.m., the North Carolina Education Lottery (NCEL) has sold over 346,000 “Merry Millionaire Raffle” tickets leaving approximately 153,000 available. The final big “Merry Millionaire Raffle” drawing is scheduled for Dec. 27 at approximately 5 p.m.

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In addition to four top prizes of \$1 million; five prizes of \$100,000; and 500 prizes of \$1,000 to be drawn during the final big drawing, there also will be a total of \$320,000 in more prizes including lots of \$100 prizes. Players will be able to see the top nine prizes broadcast on Dec. 27 at approximately 5:57 up to 6:00 p.m. on WRAL (Raleigh), WCNC (Charlotte), WITN (Greenville), WILM (Wilmington) and WYCW (Western North Carolina). All 2517 winning numbers will be posted on the official NCEL Web site (www.nc-educationlottery.org) by approximately 9 p.m. Players may also start getting their raffle tickets scanned at retail locations at that time.

Since Thursday, "Carolina Cash 5" players have won over \$661,000 and "Carolina Pick 3" players have won more than \$932,000 in prizes. More than \$5 million has been paid out in instant scratch-off ticket prizes.

Winners in the Dec. 22 Powerball drawing:

<u>Winner</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Store Where Ticket Was Purchased</u>
Nolan Helms	Charlotte	\$800,000	Sam's Mart #20
Al Smith	Iron Station		7740 Speedway Blvd., Concord
Cesar Gonzalez	Magnolia	\$200,000	Small Town's Convenience Mart
			115 North Monk St., Magnolia
Unknown		\$40,000	Circle K #8378
			5054 Highway 49 South, Harrisburg

Winner in the Dec. 25 "Carolina Cash 5" drawing:

<u>Winner</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Store Where Ticket Was Purchased</u>
Jerry Blanchard	Monroe	\$416,702	BP #15
			4102 U.S. Highway 74 West, Monroe

Winners in the Dec. 19 Powerball drawing:

<u>Winner</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Store Where Ticket Was Purchased</u>
Raymond Mahaffey	Creston	\$10,000	Backyard Convenience
			838 S. Jefferson Ave., West Jefferson
Lillie James	Newton	\$10,000	Kangaroo Express #240
			334 E. 20 th St., Newton

Winner in the Dec. 16 "Carolina Cash 5" drawing:

<u>Winner</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Store Where Ticket Was Purchased</u>
Alexander Evans	Creedmoor	\$50,000	Kroger #303
			7905 Falls of Neuse Rd., Raleigh

Instant scratch-off ticket top tier prize winners:

<u>Winner</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Game Played</u>
Billy Gates	Sylva	\$21,000	"Blackjack"
Donald Stafford	Kure Beach	\$21,000	"\$21,000 Lucky Spin"
Daren Bogey	Kinston	\$20,000	"Beat The Heat"
Tanya McClure	Stanley	\$10,000	"\$150,000 Anniversary Cash"
Paula Connors	Louisburg	\$10,000	"\$10,000 Instant Cash"
Adam Campbell	Kannapolis	\$10,000	"\$10,000 Instant Cash"
Tijuana Houston	Fayetteville	\$5,000	"Big Ol' Bucks"
Bobby Johnson	Rocky Mount	\$5,000	"Big Ol' Bucks"
David Cox	Goldsboro	\$7,000	"Super 7's"

(More)

“Carolina Cash 5” Top Prize Winners Tally

<u>Prize</u>	<u># of winners</u>
\$50,000 to \$856,998	90

Powerball Winners Tally

<u>Prize</u>	<u># of winners</u>
\$1 Million - \$200,000	84
\$50,000 - \$10,000	505

(The Powerball numbers above are since May 31, 2006,
but do not include unclaimed prizes.)

100% of the North Carolina Education Lottery net proceeds are used for pre-kindergarten programs for at risk youth, reduction of class size in early grades, school construction and college scholarships for need-based individuals.